



THE INTERIM

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THE INTERIM

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THE INTERIM is a monthly newsletter that reports on the interim activities of legislative committees, including the Legislative Council, the Environmental Quality Council, the Legislative Finance Committee, the Legislative Audit Committee, and interim legislative committees and subcommittees staffed by the Legislative Services Division. Information about the committees, including meeting schedules, agendas, and reports, is found at <http://www.leg.mt.gov>. Follow the "Committees" link or the "Interims" link to the relevant committee. The newsletter is posted on the legislative branch website on the first of each month (follow the "Publications" link).

LEGISLATIVE SESSION PER DIEM PAYMENTS TO LEGISLATORS: TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following information is intended to assist legislators and their tax preparers in handling legislative session per diem payments. Legislators should consult with their income tax preparers for specific requirements relating to individual circumstances.

General Rules...All legislator per diem payments not exceeding the amount allowed by federal law that are made to legislators living more than 50 miles from the capitol building are reimbursements made under an accountable plan, are not taxable income of the legislator, and are not subject to withholding or reporting. The difference between the amount allowed by federal law for reimbursement and the actual amount of per diem paid are considered unreimbursed expenses and, subject to certain limitations, may be a miscellaneous items deduction by the legislator.

Legislator per diem payments made to legislators who do not live in Helena but who live within 50 miles of the capitol building are not substantiated reimbursements and are thus reported as income. Withholding is made against these payments. All legislative lodging and meal expenses actually incurred by a non-Helena legislator living within 50 miles of the capitol building are unreimbursed expenses and, subject to certain limitations, may be a miscellaneous items deduction by the legislator.

Legislator per diem payments made to legislators who reside in Helena are reported as income and are subject to withholding. A legislator residing in Helena may not claim meal and lodging expenses incurred in Helena.

Accountable plan...All legislator per diem payments made to a legislator whose home is more than 50 miles from the capitol building are employee reimbursements under an accountable plan for the following reasons:

(1) Under 26 U.S.C. 162(h), a legislator is considered to have substantiated living expenses if the legislator's place of residence is more than 50 miles from the capitol building.

(2) Federal law provides one type of accountable plan for when the employee's "lodging plus meals and incidental expenses" per diem reimbursement is substantiated (26 U.S.C. 62(a)(2)(A), 26 CFR 1.62-2(c)(2)).

Excess per diem payment...The amount considered substantiated under federal law cannot exceed the amount payable to federal employees for per diem within the U.S. For Montana, the applicable 2007 reimbursement rate, set forth in 41 CFR Ch. 301 App. A, is \$111. The per diem payment made to legislators is \$98.75 per legislative day, set according to 5-2-301(4), MCA.

Reimbursements paid "under an accountable plan are excluded from the employee's gross income, are not reported as wages or other compensation on the employee's Form W-2, and are exempt from the withholding and payment of employment taxes (Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) . . .)" (26 CFR 1.62-2(c)(4)).

Montana legislators were paid per diem for 123 regular and special session legislative days at \$98.75 per day, for a total of \$12,146.25. Section 26 U.S.C. 162(h)(2)(A) considers per diem substantiated during legislative session breaks of up to 4 days. Montana law provides for reimbursement only on breaks of 3 days. During the regular session there was a 4-day break on March 1 through 4.

State per diem was paid for 3 days during the break, but because the break did not exceed 4 days, federal law allowed 4 days as substantiated per diem days. For the May and September special sessions, one extra day of per diem was paid while not in session. Federal law then allows substantiation of 122 regular and special session days at \$111 a day for a total of \$13,542. Legislators received \$1,396 less (\$13,542 - \$12,146) in per diem payments than was considered substantiated under federal law. The \$1,396 is an unreimbursed business expense and may be a miscellaneous itemized deduction on a Schedule A, subject to the 50% meals allocation under 26 U.S.C. 274(n)(1)(A) (\$44 of the \$111 is considered meals and incidental expenses) and the requirement that miscellaneous itemized deductions exceed 2% of adjusted gross income.

Legislators living more than 50 miles from the capitol building do not have their per diem payments reported on their W-2 Forms and might be able to claim the \$1,396 as an unreimbursed business expense that is a miscellaneous itemized deduction under federal law.

Helena area legislators... Under 26 U.S.C 162(h)(4), the special provisions allowing use of the federal per diem rate do not apply to legislators living within 50 miles of the capitol building. Therefore, those legislators must follow the provisions of 26 U.S.C. 274(d) and must specifically substantiate all lodging and meal expenses. Because 26 U.S.C. 274(d) requires out-of-town travel before a person can claim lodging and meal expenses, a legislator who lives in Helena cannot claim any meal or travel expenses for session activities occurring within Helena.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Council meets late January... The Legislative Council met on Jan. 29; coverage of the meeting will appear in the March issue of *The Interim*. Items on the council's agenda included: a discussion with media representatives on open caucuses and media access to legislative proceedings; delegation of legislative authority to executive branch agencies through administrative rules; efforts to expand television coverage of legislative proceedings; legislator compensation and reimbursement; rules and guidelines for legislative committees that meet during the interim; and planning for the 2009 legislative session.

Rules subcommittee still seeking suggestions from legislators... The Rules subcommittee is reviewing House, Senate, and joint rules and is soliciting comments and suggestions from legislators on changes and improvements

to legislative rules. The subcommittee requests that each legislator send his or her suggestions to one of the four subcommittee members: Sen. Vicki Cocchiarella, Sen. Kelly Gebhardt, Rep. Bob Bergren, or Rep. Dennis Himmelberger.

Subcommittee members discussed some proposed changes in January and will meet again on March 31 to continue the discussion.

Legislators have opportunity to comment on voting system changes... The council has issued a request for proposals to replace the House and Senate voting systems and displays. The council appointed legislators and staff to evaluate the proposals. Speaker Scott Sales, Rep. JP Pomnichowski, Marilyn Miller, Sen. John Brueggeman, Sen. Dave Wanzonried, John Mudd, Steve Eller, Hank Trenk, and Valencia Lane will serve on the evaluation committee.

The new systems will be installed this summer and will be ready for the 2009 legislative session. Legislators are invited to attend a demonstration by the various vendors of their proposed vote system technologies. The demonstration event is planned for Feb. 27. Legislators may not ask the vendors questions, but they may provide comments and suggestions to the evaluation committee and will have ample opportunity to provide input on the proposed web interface to the new systems. If you are interested, please contact Susan Fox at sfox@mt.gov or (406) 444-3066 for the specific date, place, and times.

No comment on the next meeting date... The next council meeting is April 1. Some agenda items include: legislator training and caucuses, bill request deadlines, legislative rules, annual and even-year sessions, and budget initiatives for the 2009 session.

For more information, visit the Legislative Council's webpage or contact Susan Byorth Fox at sfox@mt.gov or (406) 444-3066.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION OPENS ONLINE STORE

The Montana Code Annotated and related publications are available for purchase on the legislative branch website. You can access the new online store by going to <http://www.leg.mt.gov> and selecting the "Purchase" option under the "Publications" heading.

Items that may be purchased online include individual volumes of the 2007 MCA as well as the more commonly requested MCA titles, including

- Title 15--Taxation;
- Title 33--Insurance;
- Titles 60 and 61--Highways and Transportation/Motor Vehicles; and
- Title 85--Water Use.

Individual volumes sell for \$37 and individual titles for \$16. Payment by MasterCard or Visa is required when placing an order.

Other official legislative publications, such as individual volumes of the 2008 annotations, can also be purchased online when they are available for distribution.

For more information contact Kevin Hayes, legislative publications coordinator, at (406) 444-3064.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH WEBSITE SURVEY RESULTS

Survey respondents find legislative website useful... Three of every four people who responded to a recent survey described the legislative branch website as "useful," according to Gayle Shirley, legislative information officer.

The survey was conducted by the branch's Website Content and Organization Group from late November through December 2007. Its purpose was to determine whether users believe the site meets their expectations, especially with regard to navigation, content, graphic design, and organization.

"Overall, I would say we received a lot of positive comments about the site, especially the LAWS features," said Shirley, who chairs the website group. "But there were also some frustrations expressed. We hope to be able to resolve as many of those concerns as possible in the coming months."

She said the group anticipated a desire for more easily accessible meeting schedules and has already added a "What's Happening" feature to the home page at www.leg.mt.gov.

Almost 200 people took part in the website survey. Most indicated they are frequent users of the site, especially during legislative sessions. Ninety-four percent said they visit the site at least once a week during sessions. Just over half use the site that often during the interims.

"We were very pleased at the number of people who took the time to respond and the amount of thought that obviously went into their comments," Shirley said. "It did seem from the comments people made that the more they use the site, the more they like it and the easier they find it to navigate."

"The website is extremely helpful," one respondent wrote. "So many things at our fingertips that took lots of leg work previously. Any improvements that are needed are minor in my opinion—tweaking to make an excellent site even better."

Many people offered suggestions for improving the site. These included:

- addition of committee voting records;
- addition of individual legislator voting records;
- live video broadcasts of meetings year-round;
- easier way to identify one's legislators;
- more accessible legislator contact information, especially email addresses;
- better search function;
- better "calendar;" and

- more frequently updated content.

Anyone wanting a copy of the full survey results should contact Shirley at 406-444-2957 or gshirley@mt.gov.

STATE ADMINISTRATION AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HJR 46 election law study... At its Jan. 7 meeting, the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee continued its examination of election laws. The committee requested legislation to generally clean-up and clarify provisions of Title 13, MCA, election laws and, separately, to allow certain youths under age 18 to be trained and employed as election judges. The committee delayed action on the pilot project for conducting mail-ballot-only elections.

Although the committee heard about election-related funding problems facing Montana's counties, the committee wants to know more about how changes in state and federal laws have increased the costs of running elections. These include increased costs of printing ballots and the costs associated with computer equipment to participate in the statewide voter system and the federally required computerized voting systems. Secretary of State Brad Johnson will talk about election funding and other election topics at the committee's Feb. 22 meeting.

HJR 59 retirement systems study... The committee is studying public employee retirement systems as directed by HJR 59. In February, the committee will outline the contents of the "legislator's guide" described in the resolution. The committee has discussed the history and development of Montana's 10 state-administered public employee retirement systems and plans, the rationale for the elements in the plans, and trends and best practices in public retirement plan design and funding.

Retirement system principles and guidelines... One of the committee's statutory duties is to, "...establish principles of sound fiscal and public policy as guidelines..." in the context of public employee retirement plans (5-5-228, MCA). At the January meeting, the committee reviewed the document *Principles and Guidelines for Public Employee Retirement Systems* that was adopted by the committee last interim. After making some minor revisions, the members essentially re-adopted the document. The principles and guidelines are intended to be used by stakeholders and the committee when proposing changes to the retirement systems. The committee hopes that individual legislators, session standing committees, and committees of the whole will use the retirement systems principles and guidelines when proposing changes. The committee may yet revise the *Principles and Guidelines* if compelling reasons for changes are identified.

Supporting Montana veterans... Maj. Gen. Randy Mosley, adjutant general of the Montana National Guard,

gave a second briefing on the implementation of the *Post Deployment Health Reassessment Campaign Plan: Deployment Cycle Support* (6 October 2007). The Campaign Plan is the Guard's effort to ensure that veterans returning to Montana after deployment, particularly following deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, are provided with a range of services to make their return to civilian life or continuation in the Guard or Reserves as healthy as possible. Mosley will discuss the plan again at the February meeting.

Meeting scheduled for February... The committee will meet on Friday, Feb. 22 in Room 102 of the Capitol. Election laws and retirement system matters will be the main agenda items. In addition, Secretary of State Johnson will discuss elections and Mosley will provide more insight on the Campaign Plan. Other topics will fill out the remainder of the agenda. The draft agenda for the February meeting will be posted on the committee's webpage when approved by the presiding officer and will be updated as the meeting date approaches.

Please direct questions to Dave Bohyer, committee staff, at dbohyer@mt.gov or (406) 444-3064, or to Rep. Franke Wilmer, committee chair, at (406) 599-3619.

FIRE SUPPRESSION COMMITTEE

FSC subcommittees convene in January... Land use laws, the future of land ownership and residential development, the costs of fire suppression over time, and relationships between state and federal agencies made it a full day for the Fire Suppression Committee's two subcommittees on Jan. 11. The subcommittees will meet separately this winter in an effort to learn as much as possible about the various aspects of fire management and suppression in Montana and to identify options for addressing escalating costs.

WUI or Won't We?... Staff explained to the Wildland-Urban Interface subcommittee that a number of methods exist for local governments to impose requirements on developments and structures in their jurisdictional areas and there are programs to assist homeowners living in the WUI to mitigate fire danger around their homes. Those methods available to governmental bodies include subdivision regulations, zoning regulations, and local adoption of a building code enforcement program. Community Wildfire Protection Plans and grant assistance are some of the voluntary programs, outside of the structure of state law, in which communities can participate to help mitigate fire danger.

Staff described the debate about development in the WUI. Some argue that local governments and communities need only use the tools that are already available to them, that new laws and regulations are unnecessary. Others maintain that there are significant barriers--politically and culturally--to exercising the authority provided in the laws and that the laws are too limited to make any real difference.

The subcommittee's options include building on land use laws that are already in place, proposing an entirely new area of law, proposing a combination of both, or simply proposing nothing new and encouraging communities to use laws and programs already in place.

The future of land development... Headwaters Economics, a research organization based in Bozeman, shared its research on the history of residential development in western Montana and predicted trends in growth. The organization's research indicates that only 9 percent of the WUI in Montana has been developed, which, the organization believes, affords policymakers an opportunity to influence the remaining 91 percent and get ahead of the game. Headwaters displayed numerous detailed maps that show how growth has occurred and explained the methods supporting its predictions. Committee members asked to be notified of further analysis the organization completes with regard to development and costs of fire suppression in the WUI.

Infrastructure subcommittee reviews DNRC appropriations... The Infrastructure subcommittee reviewed the appropriations history for the Forestry Division in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and discussed the differences between what the division requested at the beginning of the last budget cycle versus what the Legislature ultimately appropriated.

You say tomato... Representatives of the U.S. Forest Service and DNRC talked about cost share agreements that are negotiated after a fire and about differences in fire management objectives and Appropriate Management Response implementation by federal agencies. According to documents referred to by DNRC at the meeting, AMR is "based on an evaluation of risks to firefighter and public safety, land and resource and fire management objectives, resource availability, the circumstances under which the fire occurs, including weather and fuel conditions, protection priorities, values to be protected, and cost effectiveness." AMR includes direct suppression but, according to DNRC, "those activities are focused on perimeter control and point protection for property and high value areas." In contrast, DNRC and local fire agencies are direct suppression agencies, and the differences in priorities are a source of some conflict, the subcommittee learned.

DNRC will continue to provide the subcommittee with information about its likely budget requests and will update members on the ongoing discussions with federal agencies on their differences in suppression policy.

Subcommittees to hold Helena meetings in February... The subcommittees will meet again on Feb. 15 in Room 137 of the Capitol to explore specific options as presented by staff and received as part of FSC's efforts to solicit public comment. In March, the subcommittees will finalize the options that will be included on the list that FSC will take to public hearings around the state beginning in April.

Don't let the smoke get in your eyes...For more information about FSC, contact Leanne Heisel at (406) 444-3593 or lheisel@mt.gov or visit FSC's webpage.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

Council reviews climate change...In the coming months a set of recommendations on how to reduce Montana's greenhouse gas emissions will receive further scrutiny by the Environmental Quality Council as well as the public.

EQC members in January had their first opportunity to review 54 recommendations included in the Montana Climate Change Action Plan. The governor's Climate Change Advisory Committee crafted the plan, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The recommendations range from increasing Montana's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard to promoting fuel efficient tires. During the meeting, the EQC heard from members of the CCAC, its technical working groups, and the Department of Environmental Quality.

After a discussion of the report, members agreed they needed more time to review the full document and related information that details the methods used in arriving at the policy options. Individual EQC members will submit their thoughts on the feasibility and acceptability of each to the 54 recommendations to EQC staff. In addition, the public will be invited to respond to the recommendations in the same format.

With input from the council and public, the EQC will again take up the issue at its March meeting. The Center for Climate Strategies, a nonprofit organization that worked with the CCAC to design and implement the recommendations on climate mitigation, also will be invited to the EQC meeting.

Conservation easement study...At the January meeting, the EQC also continued work on the HJR 57 study of conservation easements on trust lands. Representatives from conservation groups, agricultural interests, the wood products industry, and multiple use groups made presentations.

EQC members requested a legal analysis of the state's ability, under existing statutes, to make use of conservation easements on public lands. A brief summary with basic information about conservation easements also will be prepared for the committee.

Other topics...The two-day meeting also included updates on energy development in the British Columbia portion of the Flathead Basin, the Environmental Public Health Tracking Project, and water adjudication also were covered during the two-day meeting.

Before the Ides of March...The EQC meets March 10-11. For more information, contact Joe Kolman at jkolman@mt.gov or (406) 444-9280 or Sonja Nowakowski, at snowakowski@mt.gov or (406) 444-3078. The agenda

and other materials are posted on the EQC webpage.

WATER POLICY COMMITTEE

Committee has new member...The Water Policy Interim Committee has a new member, albeit one who is intimately familiar with the issues the panel is debating.

Just before the January meeting in Hamilton, Rep. Walt McNutt of Sidney was appointed to the committee. During the 2007 session, McNutt carried HB 831, a measure that significantly changed the process for obtaining groundwater appropriations in closed basins. McNutt has been involved in water policy for years.

Committee reviews bill drafts...Crowds of about 50 people attended the two-day Hamilton meeting. The committee heard presentations and took testimony on eight "discussion drafts." The documents, in bill draft form, were intended to give committee members and the public a starting point for discussion and did not necessarily represent the committee's view. The drafts, available on the WPIC webpage, include:

- LC5001, Accelerated permitting process--Termed the "bucket for bucket" approach, this measure would allow an applicant for a water right in a closed basin to skip the required hydrogeologic assessment if a mitigation plan or an aquifer recharge plan would offset at least 100 percent of the groundwater withdrawn by the proposed appropriation, regardless of the amount of net depletion to surface water or adverse affect.
- LC5002, Notice of intent to drill--Allows applicant for appropriation to provide notice of proposed drilling. If no objections are registered, a provisional permit would be issued.
- LC5003, Enforcement--Creates a water rights enforcement division managed by a state engineer. The division would oversee water commissioners, which currently serve under the district court system. The office would enforce water rights and conduct hearings on applications for new appropriations and changes in existing water rights.
- LC5004, Ground water quality--Clarifies that local governments may require community water and public sewer systems based upon specific criteria such as population density, soil conditions, or public health or environmental concerns.
- LC5005, Water reservations--Allows public agencies, including the state Department of Transportation, to make water reservations in closed basins to comply with the federal Clean Water Act of 1977.

- LC5006, Subdivision and water right disconnect--Requires subdivision applications include proof that a permit to appropriate water has been applied for. Also requires that final plat approval may not be granted until the permit to appropriate water has been obtained. Neither of these provisions relates to exempt wells.
- LC5007, Data study---Establishes a statewide groundwater data gathering effort through the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology.
- LC5008, Adjudication issue remarks--Directs the water judge to give higher priority to claims with objections rather than resolving issue remarks. New language directs water judge to place highest priority on resolving all issue remarks on claims with objections, regardless of whether or not the issue remark is related to the objection. Issue remarks related to flow rate or volume must be resolved before enforcement action. The new language provides that a temporary preliminary decree or a preliminary decree may be enforced with unresolved issue remarks so long as the issue remarks are not related to an objection, flow rate, or volume.

Committee members decided to continue discussing the bill drafts and, after polling themselves to determine the priorities of the members, will direct staff to show various options for the drafts.

Exempt wells...The committee heard considerable testimony about exempt wells, those which use less than 10 acre feet a year and 35 gallons a minute and do not require a water right. These wells are typically used in suburban and rural subdivisions.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation contends that such wells can deplete surface water flows. Currently, there are more than 21,000 exempt wells statewide--a number the agency projects could double by 2030. It is estimated that 300 homes using exempt wells with a half-acre of irrigation consume about the same amount of water as an irrigated 138-acre field of alfalfa.

But Michael Nicklin, an engineer who spoke on behalf of the development community and who has studied exempt wells in the Gallatin Valley, concluded that it is unlikely that exempt wells will adversely impact existing water right holders. Nicklin said many exempt wells in the Gallatin Valley are now in areas that were historically irrigated-- meaning they are no longer irrigated. He also said many of the wells are at a significant distance from the west and east branches of the Gallatin River, lessening their impact.

The committee took no action on exempt well policy.

Water rights applications...Terri McLaughlin of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation walked members through the water rights application process. So

far, there have been 10 applications under the HB 831 regulations, which generally require that a hydrogeologic assessment be completed to determine if there is net depletion and, if so, that a mitigation plan be submitted.

Next meeting in March...The WPIC is scheduled to meet March 12 and 13 in Helena. On the agenda will be a panel discussion of water marketing--a broad term which includes the leasing or buying of water rights as well as the establishment of a water bank.

New committee staff...Krista Lee Evans, who staffed the WPIC, has left the Legislative Services Division for a job in the private sector. Joe Kolman now staffs the committee. He can be reached at (406) 444-9280 or jkolman@mt.gov. The committee webpage can be found by going to <http://leg.mt.gov>.

REVENUE AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Committee and subcommittees meeting in February...The Revenue and Transportation Committee is meeting Thursday and Friday, Feb. 7 and 8 in Helena. The SJR 31 subcommittee on taxation and school funding and the HB 488 subcommittee on property reappraisal will meet separately Thursday morning. The full committee will meet at 3 p.m., Thursday in Room 137 of the Capitol and at 8:30 a.m. in the same room on Friday.

Subcommittees look at school funding primer, sales tax, and property reappraisal...The SJR 31 subcommittee will review the basics of school funding and dust off two reports from the Quality Schools Committee from last interim. Myles Watts, Montana State University, will discuss demographic trends in Montana, and the Department of Revenue will discuss its sales tax model and other sales tax topics. The subcommittee will meet Feb. 7 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 137 of the Capitol.

The HB 488 subcommittee will review a report on the history of property reappraisal cycles in Montana and will begin discussing mitigation strategies that may be considered to offset increases in property values resulting from periodic reappraisal. The Department of Revenue will provide an update on property reappraisal and information on the last two reappraisal cycles.

The subcommittee will meet Feb. 7 at 10 a.m. in Room 102 of the Capitol.

Full committee schedule...Following the subcommittee meetings, the full committee will meet at 3 p.m., Feb. 7 in Room 137 of the Capitol. The committee will discuss the Department of Revenue's authority to adopt rules on tax increment finance districts, and municipal representatives will provide background information on finance districts, including boundary changes and base year taxable value. The afternoon meeting will conclude with

Department of Revenue reports.

The committee will reconvene on Feb. 8 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 137. As part of the HJR 61 study of state conformity with federal income taxes, committee staff will present alternative legal theories regarding Montana's conformity with federal income tax law. In addition, committee staff will present an update on recodifying certain provisions of individual income taxes and corporation license taxes under Title 15, chapters 30 and 31, MCA.

The committee will also begin reviewing factors that may be considered in revising the HB 9 property tax income tax credit relief multiple. The Department of Transportation will report on ethanol credits, local government relations, federal highway projects in 2008, and Highway 2.

Want to be in the loop?...The agenda and staff reports for the February meetings are posted on the committee's webpage. For more information about the committee, contact Jeff Martin, committee staff, at (406) 444-3595 or jmartin@mt.gov.

STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tribal representatives accept committee invitation...Tribal representatives from across Montana responded to the State-Tribal Relations Committee invitation to attend the Jan. 16-17 meeting in Helena to discuss topics ranging from water and gambling compacts to the problems of methamphetamine on reservations.

The marathon meeting prompted the committee to send letters to Montana's congressional delegation recommending action and funding on water compacts with the tribes and related water projects affecting reservations and nearby areas. The committee also decided to send letters encouraging congressional action to provide foster care funding specifically for tribes and to encourage changes in the residency laws regarding foster care children who are tribal members.

Committee discusses water compacts...Susan Cottingham, program manager for the Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission, reviewed the completed water compacts (Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne, and Rocky Boy), the compacts approved by the Legislature but still awaiting congressional approval (Crow and Fort Belknap), and those still in process (Blackfeet and Salish Kootenai). Because the operation of the compact commission ends July 1, 2009, negotiators are running out time to resolve the compact with the Flathead Reservation. Cottingham agreed with Clayton Matt, a representative of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, that a water rights compact with the Flathead Reservation is preferable to claimants having to file in the Water Court. If compacts are not ready for the Blackfeet Tribe and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes by the next legislative session, the Legislature could either extend the life of the compact commission or change the length of time in which claims can be filed with the Water

Court.

In recommending that Congress act on the pending compacts, the committee also agreed to request that money be made available for related water projects. Crow Tribal Chairman Carl Venne said the money being requested for a settlement of the Crow Water Compact will affect not just tribes but all people in the area.

From health care to economic development...Lena Belcourt of the Chippewa Cree Tribe discussed Indian health care needs and funding concerns. She also reviewed an agreement, signed in January with the state, to handle Medicaid eligibility on the Rocky Boy Reservation instead of requiring tribal members to go to Havre to determine their Medicaid eligibility. She said that the 30-mile trip to the county office is difficult for elders and others for whom transportation is a problem.

Kevin Howlett of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes said that tribal members without health insurance on the Flathead Reservation, which does not have Indian health service facilities, may resort to emergency rooms or wait until their health problems worsen before seeking health care.

Howlett also talked about methamphetamine problems on the Flathead Reservation, including the seizure of nearly \$1 million in street value drugs in 2006 and more than 35 cases of babies born addicted to methamphetamine. "Meth is indiscriminate and affects everyone," he said. "The meth epidemic will rob us of our ability to provide health care. It's filling prisons and killing communities".

Joan Cassidy, chief of the Addictions Bureau at the Department of Public Health and Human Services, discussed the approach being used at seven residential methamphetamine treatment facilities, two of which are intended to serve Indians, one at the Rocky Boy Reservation and another in Great Falls. Committee member Rep. Jonathan Windy Boy and others asked if more culturally sensitive approaches are needed for successful treatment of Indians. Rick Kirn, a Fort Peck Tribal councilman and vice chair of the Board of Crime Control, noted that the federal government has cut its budget to fight methamphetamine abuse by 70%. He said the Montana Meth Project has been successful but that its results seem to have hit a plateau.

Gambling and other economic development concerns rounded out the two-day meeting. Tribal Chairman A.T. Stafne and other members of the Fort Peck Tribal Council joined Lanny Real Bird of the Crow Reservation and Tracy King of the Fort Belknap Tribal Council in urging a review of gambling compacts to improve economic development on reservations. Kirn said Fort Peck would prefer open gaming and letting tribes determine what works best for economic development on their own reservations. While no one expects Montana to have the large casinos that have sprung up in other states, Fort Peck Councilman Tom Christian said the tribes would like to use expanded gaming to attract tourists and gain income to improve infrastructure and assist with health care costs, as the three affiliated tribes 70 miles away in North Dakota have done.

More information...Audio links for the meeting are available at the committee webpage. The next meeting will be in April in Great Falls. For details on the committee contact Pat Murdo, committee staff, at (406) 444-3594 or pmurdo@mt.gov.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HJR 48 subcommittee to hear from consultants and work groups...The four-member HJR 48 subcommittee of the Economic Affairs Committee studying expansion of health insurance coverage in Montana will hear from two health insurance reform consultants at its Feb. 6 meeting in Helena. Rick Szczebak, who helped put together the pre-tax incentive proposal for the Massachusetts health insurance reforms, will provide information by conference call on Section 125 requirements. Ed Haislmaier from the Heritage Foundation will discuss what other states are doing to expand health insurance coverage.

The subcommittee also will hear a report on the work being done by work groups that formed after a health care forum in October. Work groups are reviewing insurance coverage and pricing transparency, among other topics. There also will be an update on a proposed initiative to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program to cover more Montana children and a review of options and impacts related to expanding Medicaid coverage in Montana.

The Feb. 6 meeting starts at 10 a.m. in Room 137 of the State Capitol. More information is available at the Economic Affairs Committee website or by contacting Pat Murdo at 406-444-3594 or pmurdo@mt.gov.

ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Wind integration and public power topic of January meeting...The Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee met Jan. 24 to begin work on wind integration and public power.

The wind power study, which is aimed at analyzing potential costs/benefits of wind development, focuses on the impacts of adding wind power into a utility's operations, as well as the costs of marketing wind power and having adequate transmission. Elliot Mainzer with BPA discussed the recently released "Northwest Wind Integration Action Plan." Van Jamison with POWAIR covered generation interconnection costs, and Larry Flowers with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory discussed energy diversity. Tom Kaiserski with the Energy Infrastructure and Promotion Division updated the committee on a wind integration study underway in NorthWestern Energy's service area. Representatives of Montana's utilities offered their perspectives on wind power.

The ETIC reviewed a variety of public power models employed across the country. In its simplest form, public

power means that citizens own and operate their own public power utility. There are different forms of public power, depending on the governing body that owns and operates a public utility. Across the U.S., a total of 46 new public power utilities have formed over the last two years, according to statistics compiled by the American Public Power Association. Municipalities have been active in creating public utilities.

In Montana there are electrical cooperatives and municipal power operations. Efforts to grant the state, or a board or authority attached to the state, the ability to own and operate utilities also have been pursued. A snapshot of the various public power projects pursued in Montana over the past decade was included in the committee discussion. Additional coverage of the January meeting will be in the March issue of *The Interim*.

May meeting planned...The ETIC meets again in May. Information on the ETIC and its studies are available on the committee's webpage. For more information contact Sonja Nowakowski at snowakowski@mt.gov or (406) 444-3078.

LAW AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Hardin Detention Center woes...The Law and Justice Committee met Jan. 10-11 in Helena. Valencia Lane, committee staff attorney, reviewed the history of the Hardin Detention Center that was built to house state prisoners on a short-term basis. However, the Department of Corrections does not need additional capacity. The detention center sought to contract for federal inmates or inmates from other states, but the Department of Corrections determined that the facility could not be used for those purposes. As a result, the detention center, built with \$27 million in revenue bonds issued by the city of Hardin, is empty. Hardin contested the department's determination by asking for an attorney general's opinion. However, the opinion found that the Department of Corrections had the authority to regulate the acceptance of inmates from other states and that a detention center cannot be used as a correctional facility for out-of-state inmates. In December 2007, the city of Hardin filed a lawsuit asking the District Court to overturn the attorney general's opinion and enjoin the Department of Corrections from preventing the detention center's contracting efforts.

Hospital costs for inmates and persons injured by local law enforcement...Representatives of St. Vincent's Healthcare in Billings, talked about the cumulative effects on medical costs for treating individuals with serious wounds from shoot-outs with local law enforcement. These incidents have a significant effect on the hospital's charity care budget and on the costs that are ultimately shifted to other payers. In addition, hospitals are not equipped to handle the security risks of treating these individuals without the help of law enforcement. Mike Foster, director of advocacy at St. Vincent's, asked the committee to consider amending laws

governing medical costs for inmates, including the definition of "inmate" and provisions related to the county's payment responsibilities. Mark Taylor, representing the Montana Hospital Association, said that these medical costs are a statewide problem.

Committee considers Indian youth concerns... During a panel discussion on Indian youth who are in the criminal justice system or who are at risk of entering the system, former U.S. District Attorney Sherry Matteucci said state and tribal governments should work together to deal with the needs of Indian youth. She said the best diversion programs are family support, mentoring programs, and the Tribal Court.

Karen Duncan, Youth Community Corrections, Department of Corrections, reviewed the cultural programs offered by the department for Indian youth, such as sweat lodges at Pine Hills and Riverside, treatment training for chemical dependency programs, and Native American wellness days.

Bob Peake of the Court Administrator's Office said, for 2007, statistics show that of the 6,692 youths processed through Youth Courts, 846 (12.6%) were Indian, of the 10,467 total intakes or "tickets" for offenses, 1,519 (14.5%) were given to Indian youth, and of the 13,052 total offenses handled by Youth Court, 2,043 (15.6%) were offenses committed by Indian youth. A Department of Corrections handout stated that Indians make up 7% of the state's population, but account for 39% of the incarcerated youth population.

Committee creates two working groups...The committee split into two working groups. The adult justice system working group discussed treatment alternatives for mentally ill offenders pursuant to the HJR 26 study, diversion alternatives for drug offenders pursuant to the SJR 24 study, and the civil involuntary commitment pursuant to the HJR 50 study. The juvenile justice system working group, discussed the juvenile justice system pursuant to the SJR 6 study and to the components of the HJR 26 study related to mental health treatment for justice-involved youth.

Adult justice system working group...The adult justice system working group is still determining its areas of study, but will:

- conduct the HJR 50 survey of counties on involuntary commitment costs;

- compile more data on the sentencing, placement, and revocations for certain nonviolent drug offenders;
- receive a report on how the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division in the Department of Public Health and Human Services proposes to spend about \$15 million in legislatively appropriated money for mental health services; and
- take testimony on prison and jail standards related to mental health treatment for detainees and inmates.

Juvenile justice system working group... At the juvenile justice system working group meeting, Bart Lubow, director of Programs for High Risk Youth for The Annie E. Casey Foundation, discussed the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, which is a multi-year initiative funded by the foundation and aimed at stopping the inappropriate use of detention through collaborative efforts by improving screening processes and improving outcomes for youth as well as enhancing public safety. Lubow reported that funds have been provided for collaborative efforts in Missoula, Cascade, and Hill Counties. He also suggested that Montana laws with respect to juvenile detention could be tightened.

Cil Robinson, of the Montana Board of Crime Control, which is responsible for administering the state general fund grants to regional youth detention facilities, presented data on the use of juvenile detention facilities by agencies that use the facility, type of offense, and average lengths of stay.

The working group discussed its priorities and concerns and decided to focus on three areas:

- crisis intervention and early identification;
- providing effective alternatives to detention or incarceration; and
- improving outcomes with respect to probation and re-entry following incarceration.

The working group agreed that special attention should be given to mental health and the disparities related to Indian youth.

Next meeting in February...The Law and Justice Committee will meet on Feb. 28-29 in Helena. The two working groups (adult and juvenile) will conduct concurrent public meetings. For more information, please contact Sheri Heffelfinger at (406) 444-3596 or visit the committee's webpage.

THE BACK PAGE

NO PLACE LIKE HOME?

The Australian Stay or Go Model as an Alternative to Evacuation in Wildfire

By Leanne Heisel
Legislative Research Analyst

SOUND FAMILIAR?

It's hot. It's windy. It hasn't rained in months. A power line goes down, someone lights a cigarette and tosses the match out a car window, or drives away from a campfire with the embers still smoldering, and that's all it takes. Fueled by wind and crunchy-dry vegetation, the fire is unstoppable and consumes everything in its path, including lives, homes, and agricultural land. All anyone can do is get out of the way and hope the weather smiles upon the toasted landscape. But this is not October in Malibu or August in Augusta. It's February in Cockatoo.

Australians call February 16, 1983 Ash Wednesday--the day that over 100 fires began their rampage through Victoria and South Australia. Over 1.5 million acres were burned, 75 people were dead, and over 2,500 homes were destroyed.

Legislative researchers often inventory other state laws in a particular policy area in hopes that someone somewhere else with the same problem has found a solution that could be the inspiration for a Montana-style approach. While tempting, it is usually folly to focus much energy beyond the borders of the United States when casting about for policy ideas in other jurisdictions. Differences among nations in constitutions, laws, politics, and social behavior can make meaningful comparative study difficult. But wildfire doesn't respect the constitution. It doesn't care which side of the road you drive on or which way the water swirls when the toilet flushes. Countries with similar combinations of climate (dry), vegetation (dry), and human development (sprawling) have common experiences with the effects of wildfire. Some interesting distinctions appear, however, in how people on the other side of the world react to wildfire and attempt to mitigate its damage. Can the land that brought us Foster's Lager and Keith Urban also show us a different way of responding when wildfire threatens homes and property?

FROM THE ASHES

Once the smoke from the Ash Wednesday fires had cleared, the Australian government undertook a series of studies that focused on why houses burned, why each fatality occurred, and how life and property may be better protected during these events. The result has been an approach called "Stay and Defend or Leave Early" or "Stay or Go" in which, under certain circumstances, the homeowner stays on his or her property and protects it, rather than evacuating at the first sign of trouble.

Alan Rhodes with the Country Fire Authority Australia writes

that Stay or Go "advocates that people living in fire prone areas should decide how they will respond to wildfire."¹ A fundamental component of Stay or Go is education, so that a homeowner recognizes the risks, accepts responsibility, understands the options, and effectively plans and implements those options. Others tend to highlight the "Stay" in this approach.

"The Australian experience has been that mass evacuations of communities should not be undertaken", writes Keith Harrap, acting executive director of operations support for the New South Wales Rural Fire Service, "People who stay behind reduce the loss of both life and property."² The idea is that if a home is properly built and the homeowner is prepared and trained, the homeowner may not only have an improved chance of survival, but can be a key resource in the firefighting effort. Harrap cites research completed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization as evidence that "a properly prepared house is in fact a safe haven rather than a risk in times of major wildland fires." He adds that "when a major wildland fire touches on the urban interface, exposing hundreds of homes to a simultaneous threat, there never will be sufficient firefighting resources available to cope with the situation. . . . It's far more efficient to have the added resource of the homeowners who, given the proper information and advice, can undertake the vitally important role of extinguishing the embers that potentially threaten the integrity of any structure."

According to Harrap, while Australian fire officials "don't as a rule support evacuations from properly prepared residences," they do recognize that in some cases evacuation--early evacuation--is the only safe option. Harrap concludes that by "fire services taking a leading role in the education of their communities with regard to wildland-urban interface fire protection and relevant government authorities supporting the effort with appropriate legislation and codes, there will be an inevitable reduction in number of lives lost and properties destroyed."

AXE, BUCKET, SHOVEL, . . . AND WET BLANKET

Of course, no responsible government or firefighting service would even consider recommending this type of approach in the absence of a protocol and of resources made available to homeowners. Local governments, local fire service entities, and community members have formed organizations that produce guidelines for protecting property and checklists so that property owners can gauge their level of preparedness.

¹ "The Australian Stay or Go Approach: Factors Influencing Householder Decisions", Alan Rhodes, Country Fire Authority (CFA) Australia/RMIT University, Melbourne.

² "Shelter Shock", *Wildfire Magazine*. Web URL: http://wildfiremag.com/pub-ed/shelter_shock/

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia has published a pamphlet called *Should I Stay or Should I Go? A guide to help you take action this bushfire season*. It contains a discussion of the characteristics of bushfires, list of supplies needed, the events likely to occur as the fire approaches and passes through the property, and a preparedness checklist with questions like "Do you understand the nature of bushfires and the level of risk to you and your family?" "Are you committed to undertake and maintain the required level of preparation before the bushfire season?" "Do you believe your house will offer your family adequate protection from a bushfire after all preparation activities have been completed?" Those who do not wish to stay are encouraged to leave early.

Another pamphlet published by the same organization includes a specific action plan with each task that must be accomplished--inside the house and outside--before the fire front approaches, as the fire front approaches and during the fire, and after the fire front has passed. Before the fire front arrives, a homeowner should, among other tasks:

- Fill basins, sinks, bath, troughs and buckets with water and locate maps and other equipment.
- Soak towels and rugs in water and lay along the inside of external doorways.
- Soak blankets and keep them handy for protection against radiant heat.
- Place a ladder and torch [flashlight] close to the manhole [access to attic] and regularly check the ceiling space for embers.
- If possible, block downpipes and fill gutters with water.
- Regularly patrol for spot fires around your home and put them out.

During the fire, homeowners are to move inside, frequently check the roof cavity and interior of the house for spot fires, drink plenty of water, and tune in to the radio for fire information. Once the front has passed, the primary activity is patrolling for and extinguishing spot fires.

All the wet towels in the Southern Hemisphere won't help, though, if a home is not built or retrofitted to certain standards and if property around a home is not properly maintained. Some local governments do require certain building standards in extreme bushfire-prone areas. These include masonry construction for external walls, an independent water supply, internal hose fitting, and spark-proof chimneys. However, building codes and where building is allowed to occur in the face of predicted higher intensity fire seasons is a source of debate in the halls of Australia's state governments, just as it is in the United States.

STAY OR GO, AMERICAN-STYLE

Extensive public education, decades of research, and local motivation drive Australia's Stay or Go approach. Sarah McCaffrey of the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Research

Station has explored whether such a program could work in the United States. McCaffrey traveled to Australia to learn firsthand about Stay or Go.

A number of institutional and social factors play into an examination of whether Stay or Go would work in the United States, according to McCaffrey's research. Those include the organization and responsibilities of fire management agencies; housing, construction, and development patterns; and human behavior and education.

In the United States, the wildland fire management agencies are land management agencies that are increasingly forced to engage in structure protection because of the increasing number of structures in the path of wildfire. Australia's state-level land management agencies are responsible for wildfire management in their jurisdictional areas, but the responsibility for protection of structures falls to another state agency with more of an emergency management focus.

Differences in building construction standards are also noteworthy. In Australia, writes McCaffrey, "metal roofs have long been a standard and preferred construction practice; whereas metal roofs are not as prevalent is the U.S. where, until recently, wood shingle roofs³ have been popular in many fire prone areas."⁴ McCaffrey concludes that:

In terms of human behavior, having individuals stay and protect their property requires clear understanding of fire dynamics and the significant physical and psychological resources that are required of individuals who stay. Australia has developed and laid the groundwork for its approach over more than two decades. Their outreach work is quite clear about two key items -- that most houses are lost through ember attack and that radiant heat is the primary cause of death from wildfire. This knowledge is integral to understanding their concept that 'People protect houses and houses protect people.'

McCaffrey says that because of these fundamental differences, a Stay or Go model is likely not appropriate for universal adoption in the United States. She concedes, however, that some aspects may lend themselves well to certain locations. Residents of a few communities near Rancho Santa Fe, California, would agree.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE

Watching the news footage from Southern California last October, it was easy to imagine that the apocalypse was nigh. The relentless Santa Ana winds and dry countryside fed a multitude of huge blazes that forced mass evacuations

³ The Helena City Commission recently amended its zoning regulations to require the use of fire-resistant roofing materials on new construction and on replacement of more than 50% of a roof within the city's wildland-urban interface zone, which the commission defined as the entire city.

⁴ "Applying Australia's Stay or Go Approach in the U.S. Would it work?", Sarah McCaffrey, USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station.

and consumed over a thousand homes-- that's not news to anyone who wasn't living under a rock last fall. What may be news, though, is that a handful of communities in San Diego County known as Shelter in Place⁵ communities lost none of the 2,460 homes located within their boundaries to the Witch Creek fire, one of the area's most devastating.

The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD) identifies five communities as Shelter in Place communities and the district enforces the stringent building and landscape standards that are imposed there. Residents must adhere to a district-approved vegetation management plan and homes must have the following design features:

- fire-resistive materials used in construction;
- boxed eaves;
- residential fire sprinklers;
- a well-maintained, fire-resistive landscape with a minimum 100-foot defensible space surrounding all structures;
- a "Class-A", non-combustible roof;
- dual pane or tempered glass windows; and
- chimneys with spark arresters containing a minimum 1/2" screening.

The communities themselves must have:

- adequate roadway and driveway widths, designed to accommodate two way traffic and large firefighting apparatus;
- adequate water supply and water flow for firefighting efforts; and
- vegetation modification zones.

"Why not evacuate?", the fire district's Shelter in Place brochure asks, and then answers: "Most wildfire-related deaths occur during evacuation efforts." Heavy smoke, flying embers, panicked drivers, and the sheer volume of cars and horse trailers on the road are named as the factors that contribute to the high number of injuries and deaths during evacuations.

Not Convinced

Given the outcome of the Witch Creek fire's run through these communities, the residents and some planners in the area consider the district's Shelter in Place program an unmitigated success. The program has its detractors, though, who caution that Shelter in Place may be misunderstood and that a homeowner whose home is not

built to the standards as those in the RSFFPD and who has not prepared the property, yet chooses to stay in defiance of evacuation orders risks his or her life as well as the lives of firefighters.

In an extreme event, is evacuation still considered in a Shelter in Place community? RSFFPD's brochure would suggest that it is not, or that residents need not comply, which is one reason some fire professionals question the approach. A December 2, 2007, article in the San Diego Union-Tribune⁶ quotes Dave Bacon, a retired national forest fire chief and head of a private fire protection company as stating that Shelter in Place "doesn't mean you always stay at home. It means you can stay at home because you have done advance preparation. You need to know when to evacuate and when evacuation is too late." RSFFPD's brochure stresses that by residing in one of the five Shelter in Place communities, a homeowner "will *not* need to evacuate during a wildfire", yet the Union-Tribune story profiles Emil Costa, a resident of one of the Rancho Santa Fe Shelter in Place communities who stayed home in defiance of evacuation orders. If your fire district says you don't have to evacuate but another entity has issued evacuation orders, who do you listen to?

Other critics believe a Shelter in Place approach allows development in areas that are so prone to fire that they simply should not be developed, period. Identifying areas where the fire danger is extreme and prohibiting building in those areas is one option available to policymakers, but it is generally an unpalatable one to many, especially in places where private property rights are held sacred.

BATTLING MARSUPIALS

In a November 5, 2007, commentary published in the Washington Post National Weekly Edition Steve Pyne, a professor at Arizona State University and author of numerous texts on wildfire and its history, writes that, in contrast to Australia's Stay or Go model:

. . . the American resort to ever-vaster mandatory mass evacuations looks both pathetic and paranoid. Apparently we can defend our houses with an M16 and a bazooka if we choose, but not with a garden hose and a rake. There can never be enough firefighters to shield all structures during a conflagration. They shouldn't have to. Let homeowners take responsibility, not only for preparing their property but for protecting it. Knowing that you might be called on to defend against the next outbreak of a Santa Ana fire avalanche ought to concentrate the mind wonderfully.

Stay or Go, Shelter in Place, whatever it's called, the concept of staying home and toughing it out as a wildfire bears down is a scary one and foreign to most Americans. It's a little disconcerting to think about making sure you have wet

⁵ In her paper, McCaffrey notes that the terms Stay or Go and Shelter in Place (SIP) are often used interchangeably, but that there is a distinct difference. "SIP is generally described as a fairly passive process where any individuals who stay would simply passively shelter in fire resistant structures. When the passivity of the SIP approach was described to Australians, it was greeted with horror as something that would endanger lives." "The Australian process is an active one," she continues, "--if the homeowners aren't well prepared and actively protecting their home before, during (from within the house), and after the fire front passes through, they shouldn't stay." SIP literature produced by Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, however, indicates that its style of SIP is not entirely passive and mirrors much of the information provided by Australian fire service agencies.

⁶ "'Shelter in Place' kept flames at bay; Strategy pays off but has its critics"; Lori Weisberg and Emmet Pierce, San Diego Union-Tribune; Dec. 2, 2007.

blankets on hand to protect you from the intense radiant heat as a roaring fire front passes over your home. But, under certain circumstances, it appears to work, and decades of research in Australia has convinced the denizens of the bush that it is a viable option. However communities and governments across America's fire-prone landscapes

choose to act in the face of what most agree will be intensifying wildfire seasons in the years to come, the notion that people who live where fire has always burned and will continue to burn should assume some level of responsibility cannot be ignored. To do so may prove to be as foolish as trying to box a wallaby.



INTERIM CALENDAR

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, ALL ROOM DESIGNATIONS ARE IN THE CAPITOL

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February 2008						
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Economic Affairs Committee, HJR 48 subcommittee, Room 137, 10 a.m.	7 RTIC SJR 31 subcom., Rm. 137 RTIC HB 488 subcom. Rm 102 Revenue & Trans- portation Committee, Room 137, 3 p.m. Economic Affairs Committee, Great	8 Revenue and Trans- portation Committee, Room 137, 8:30 a.m.	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 FSC Wildland-Urban Interface subcom- mittee, Room 137 FSC Infrastructure subcommittee, Room 137	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Committee, Room 102	23
24	25	26	27	28 Law and Justice Committee	29 Law and Justice Committee	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 2008						1
2	3	4 Fire Suppression Committee Contractor subcommittee	5	6 Legislative Finance Committee, Room 102 LFC subcommittee on State Fund/ workers' comp, Room 152	7 Legislative Finance Committee, Room 102	8
9	10 Environmental Quality Council	11 Environmental Quality Council	12 Water Policy Committee, Helena LFC HJR 22 Dental study workgroup, Room 102, 9 a.m.	13 Water Policy Committee, Helena Post Secondary Education Policy and Budget Sub- committee, Room 102, 9 a.m.	14	15
16	17	18	19 Montana State University State Legislative Day Strand Union Building, MSU Campus, Bozeman, noon to 4 p.m.	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Fire Suppression subcommittees	28 Fire Suppression Committee	29
30	31 Legislative Council, Rules subcommittee					

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